THE

EPHESIAN MATRON.

[Price 1s.]

THE

EPHESIAN MATRON.

A

TALE.

FOUNDED UPON FACT.

EPHESIAN MATRON.

AS IT WAS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE

IN

HAYMARKET HOUSE.

BY Mr. DIBDIN.

LONDON:

Printed for W. GRIFFIN, in Catherine-Street, in Catherine-
Street, Strand. 1769.

THE EPHESIAN MATRON.

A

COMIC SERENATA,

After the Manner of the *Italian*.

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT

RANELAGH HOUSE.

By Isaac Bickerstaffe.

The MUSIC by Mr. DIBDIN.

LONDON:

Printed for W. GRIFFIN, at GARRICK'S-HEAD, in CATHARINE-STREET, STRAND. 1769.

THE

ADVERTISEMENT.

THOSE who are acquainted with Italian muſical compoſitions, muſt know, that there are among them many ſhort comic dramas, (a longer ſort of cantatas) where little fables are purſued; ſuch as La Serva Padrona, Baioco e Serpilla, Lo Maeſtro di Cappella, &c.

It has been ſuggeſted to the managers of RANELAGH, by a gentleman long preſiding with unrival'd talents, over the moſt capital of our public entertainments; that ſomething in the ſame way wou'd be an improvement upon the detached ſongs and ballads, uſually ſung in their orcheſtra. In deference to his judgment, this is an Eſſay.

It

It would be needleſs to obſerve that the words are to be no farther conſider'd than as they are adapted, and ſerve to give ſtile and character to the muſic. But ſhould the muſic, when it has been ſufficiently heard to render it ſomewhat familiar, be found pleaſing enough to make the entertainment, on the whole, agreeable to the public, other pieces may be written much more pardonable, than what has here, at a ſhort warning, been in great haſte put together.

CHARACTERS.

CHARACTERS.

The FATHER,	Mr. LEGG.
The CENTURION,	Mr. DIBDIN.
The MATRON,	Mrs. BADDELY.
The MAID,	Mrs. THOMPSON.

THE EPHESIAN MATRON.

SCENE I.

The Scene is ſuppoſed to lie in a Tomb, near the City of EPHESUS. *A Lamp burning; on one Side a dead Body. The* MATRON *claſping her Huſband's Corps; her* FATHER, *and her* MAID *endeavouring to force her away.*

TRIO.

MATRON. HENCE, hence! away; in vain you ſtrive
To tear me from my dear dead man;
His wife I am, dead or alive,
My love ſhall end where it began.

FATHER. But daughter——

MAID. Miſtreſs——

MATRON. Grief, O Grief!

1. 2. Will ſtaying here bring him relief?
To molder with him in the grave
Is killing two.

MATRON. Adieu, adieu;
To die with him is all I crave.
1. 2. Some comfort take——
MATRON. My heart will break.
1. 2. And with us go.
MATRON. No, no, no, no.
Oh, oh, oh, oh!
1. 2. You ſhall, you muſt.
MATRON. No, his dear duſt
By me ſhall never be deſerted;
But here I'll ſtay,
Both night and day,
Till Death has join'd whom Death hath parted.

FATHER.

Well, daughter, ſince intreaties all are vain,
And ſtill your purpoſe you maintain,
To give a ſample
Of nuptial love,
And ſo to prove
To future wives a rare example,
I leave you to your fate.
The ſad but glorious work complete,
And ſince all elſe your conſtancy denies,
When Death, as ſoon he muſt, hath clos'd your eyes,
Your weeping father ſhall return——
You cannot hinder him to mourn——
And with due rites perform your obſequies.

AIR.

AIR.

But more——A monument I'll raiſe,
Where, ſacred to your endleſs praiſe,
This juſt inſcription ſhall be read:

" Nipt in the flow'r of charms and youth,
" A miracle of female truth
" Lies here inroll'd among the dead.

" Stop traveller, and, drawing near,
" Beſtow the tribute of a tear.
" Death ſnatch'd her conſort from her ſide;
" She lov'd, ſhe ſorrow'd, and ſhe died.

SCENE II.

The MATRON, *the* MAID.

MATRON.

At length we're left alone,
And the ſad widow may indulge her moan.
Receive me, earth, upon thy flinty breaſt,
Helpleſs, forlorn, undone, with pain oppreſt;

AIR.

And while, grown frantic with my woes,
I beat my boſom, tear my hair,
Come, ye furies; come, deſpair;
And grief that never comfort knows;
All your horrors here diſplay;
Nor thou, O Death! be long away.

MAID.

So, there ſhe lies upon the floor!
There never was ſuch madneſs ſure.
And will you, in the dreary gloom
Of this unwholeſome tomb,
In ſighs and tears your life conſume?

MATRON.

MATRON.

What ſhou'd a wretched widow do?

MAID.

You're young and handſome yet,
And might another huſband get;
Ay, that you might——or two.

MATRON.

No, no, I death prefer.

MAID.

The more fool you.

MATRON.

This only I entreat, my faithful maid,
That with me here you'll ſtay,
And ſee my breathleſs clay,
When I am dead, by my dear huſband laid.

MAID.

Well, Madam, ſince I muſt I will.
But give me leave to ſay,
You'd better change your purpoſe ſtill,
And act a wiſer way.

AIR.

If I was a wife, and my deareſt dear life,
Took it into his noddle to die,
E'er I took the whim, to be buried with him,
I think I'd know very well why.

If poignant my grief, I'd ſearch for relief,
Not ſink with the weight of my care;
A ſalve might be found, no doubt, above ground,
And I think I know very well where.

Another kind mate ſhou'd give me what Fate
Wou'd not from the former allow:
With him I'd amuſe, the hours you abuſe,
And I think I'd know very well how.

'Tis true I'm a maid, and ſo't may be ſaid
No judge of the conjugal lot;
Yet marriage, I ween, has a cure for the ſpleen,
And I think I know very well what.

SCENE

SCENE III.

The CENTURION, *the* MAID, *the* MATRON *on the Ground by her Huſband's Body.*

CENTURION.

Ho, who's there below?

MAID.

Bleſs us! I ſhall die with fear!
A man deſcends into the cave!
What ſhall our lives our honours ſave!

CENTURION.

Hey, who the devil have we here?

MAID.

A handſome fellow, never ſtir!

CENTURION.

Speak.

MAID.

MAID.

Two ſad women, worthy Sir.
A Matron, and my miſtreſs, ſhe
Who there upon the ground you ſee:
Her conſort dy'd ſome days ago,
Which griev'd the poor dear lady ſo,
That, being here laſt night inter'd—
I think the like was never heard—
She wou'd needs be buried too.
And now, Sir, tell me who are you.

CENTURION.

A ſoldier—ſtanding at my poſt,
To guard yon gibbets on the coaſt,
I ſaw a light, and hither came,
Directed by the glimmering flame.

MAID.

My miſtreſs, Sir, is much to blame.
Noble, and rich, and young, and fair—

CENTURION.

Her character is ſomething rare.
Soft—harken—yes—ſhe draws her breath.

MAID.

Beſides ſhe's almoſt ſtarved to death.

Two days ſhe has not eat a bit.

CENTURION.

I'll rouſe her from this deſperate fit.

AIR.

Lovely dame, what, ho! what, ho!
From the depths of pain and woe,
A ſoldier calls your beauty.
And can bravery do leſs?
To ſuccour ladies in diſtreſs,
Is ſtill the ſoldier's duty.

Cupid whiſpers in your ear,
And will you refuſe to hear,
Accents form'd to move?
Oh! lovely dame,
For ſhame, for ſhame!
Shall one ſo fair,
Be kill'd by care?
Riſe to life and love.

SCENE IV.

The CENTURION, *the* MAID, *the* MATRON *rising from the Ground.*

MATRON.

Who'd comfort to a wretch afford?
Gone near half way to meet my lord,
You fetch me back.

MAID.

Upon my word,
I'm very glad your journey's ſtopt.

CENTURION.

Fair creature, gentler thoughts adopt;
You have fulfill'd your nuptial vow;
To yourſelf do juſtice now;
Nor ſacrifice, by cruel wrong,
A nymph ſo handſome and ſo young.

MAID.

The rogue has a bewitching tongue.

MATRON.

He's very good I muſt allow,
To take a widow's part ſo kindly.

CENTURION.

Then follow not deſtruction blindly;
Nor the gifts of Heav'n abuſe,
But eat and live.

MATRON.

Indeed, I ſwore
Never to taſte a morſel more:
But ſince through pity you intrude
Upon my ſorrows, 'twould be rude
The proffer'd ſuccour to refuſe.

CENTURION.

Here is the meat, my lovely dear!
But firſt your drooping ſpirits cheer.
A flaſk of wine I've got by ſtealth:
'Tis ſtrong and old,
And from the cold
Upon my poſt this night has fenc'd me.

MATRON.

I vow and ſwear it goes againſt me:
However———Sir, your health.

DUET.

CENTU. By Venus, mother of deſire,
Your eyes have ſet me all on fire!
There's magic in your touch.

MATRON. My eyes! dear Sir— a-well-a-day!
Tears muſt have waſh'd their power away:
Indeed you ſay too much.

CENTU. My heart is Cupid's drum,
He beats a march and cries, Come,
Come, follow me your chief.

MATRON. My heart's in perturbation;
I too, feel a palpitation;
But 'tis the effects of grief.

A. 2. What ſhall I do!
O tell me, who
Can eaſe the pangs I feel?
'Tis love——'tis grief,
Bring ſome relief,
A wounded heart to heal.

SCENE V.

The CENTURION *taking his Leave, the* MATRON, *the* MAID.

CENTURION.

A moment now I muſt be gone;
I guard hard by ſome gibbet thieves;
Another ſoon my watch relieves,
I will be here again anon.

MATRON.

Well, if you muſt be gone, you muſt,
No ſoldier ſhou'd neglect his poſt:
But I will candidly confeſs,
Your care was ſoothing my diſtreſs;
And 'twould have pleaſed me cou'd you juſt
Have ſtaid to ſee me——give up the ghoſt.

AIR.

AIR.

But before you go away, Sir,
As we ne'er may meet again;
Give me leave to thank you, pray Sir,
For the gen'rous care you've ta'en.

Well your candour might impeach me,
Was I blind to your desert;
But, tho' love can never reach me,
Friendship still may touch my heart.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

MATRON, MAID.

MAID.

A ſweeter man I never ſaw!
He might give woman-kind the law.
He talks and moves with ſo much grace!—
And then he has a charming face.

MATRON.

Dear girl, this is a ſhocking place;
So dark and diſmal——then the ſmell
Is really overcoming.

MAID.

Well.
Why don't you leave it?

MATRON.

Leave!——who, I!
Have I not ſworn that here I'll die?

MAID.

MAID.

Such oaths are better broke than kept;
Enough you've ſigh'd, enough you've wept;
With this young fellow quit the cave;
He's worth three dead men.

MATRON.

Sure you rave.
He wou'd not yield his youth to chear
A weeping widow.

MAID.

Never fear.

MATRON.

And ſhou'd I lightly ſeem inclined,
What wou'd the world ſay?

MAID.

Never mind.

SCENE

SCENE VII.

The MATRON, *the* MAID, *the* CENTURION *in a Fright.*

AIR.

CENTU. Zounds! I'm undone!
Where ſhall I run?
They've ſtol'n a thief from the gibbet!
And, when I'm in his place,
As will ſoon be the caſe,
A fine figure I ſhall exhibit.

MAID.

Bleſs us, what ſtorm is now a brewing?

MATRON.

What is the matter?

CENTURION.

Death and ruin.
While love with you prolong'd my ſtay,
Some rogues have watch'd their time,
And, from the gibbet, ſtol'n a thief away.

The magiſtrates to me will lay the crime;
And when 'tis miſs'd, and I before 'em,
That other centinels their watch may keep,
I know they'll hang me interrorum.

MATRON.

Hang you!

MAID.

I vow it makes me weep.

MATRON.

Is there no ſhift?

CENTURION.

No, none.

MAID.

'Tis true.

CENTURION.

Farewell! eternally adieu,
This night I ſhall have cauſe to rue.

MATRON.

Hold! there's a thought come in my head!
My huſband is already dead,

And conſequently has no feeling;
And 'twou'd be very cruel dealing
To let you ſuffer for my ſake;
Yonder he lies, his body take;
Strip off the ſhroud, and hang it where
The robber has been taken down.

MAID.

A fine contrivance this, I ſwear.

MATRON.

While they ſee a body there,
The diff'rence never will be known.
Fate would my huſband from me rend,
But ſhan't, if I can help it, take my friend.

MAID.

Thus of all fear, at once, ſhe rids you.

CENTURION.

How ſhall I thank——

MAID.

By doing as ſhe bids you.

AIR.

AIR.

Men talk of their prudence and ſenſe,
And make a ſtrange pother
With this, that, and t'other,
But, gad, it is all a pretence.

Their genius is trivial and common,
And for a ſhift,
At a dead lift,
There's nought like the wit of a woman.

To that every ſpring is obedient;
And for ways and for means,
If to meddle ſhe deigns,
No premier of ſtate,
Like her can create
Or find you out an expedient.

SCENE VIII.

The MATRON, *the* MAID, *the* FATHER, *the* CENTURION.

MATRON.

My father comes, and with him brings
The ſoldier.

MAID.

Bleſs us! more ſtrange things!

FATHER.

Daughter, e'er this, I thought you dead;
And by paternal fondneſs led
From the city ſadly came
To pay thoſe dues the dead may claim.
But near the tomb I met this man;
Your huſband's body on his back.

MATRON.

Name not my huſband, Sir.—Alack!

FATHER.

Firſt, to accuſe him, I began,
And call'd him robber of the dead;
But you approv'd the deed he ſaid;
Now, tell me, is there truth in this?

MAID.

I'll anſwer for my lady,——Yes.

FATHER.

If that by any proof appears,
Her wedding-day she settles straight.

CENTURION.

Say, dear, how long is't I must wait?

FATHER.

Come, name your time, child.

MATRON.

Seven years.

MAID.

Sooner she cannot dry her tears
For her dear departed mate.

FATHER.

Sev'n years! prepost'rous! speak again.

MATRON.

Well, let him wait a twelve-month then.

MAID.

The time is somewhat shorten'd, Sir.

FATHER.

But still too long.

MATRON.

Well, half a year.

CENTURION.

CENTURION.

Too long by half.

MATRON.

A month then, pray.

FATHER.

Daughter, you ſhall be his to-day.

MATRON.

To-day!

FATHER.

To-day.

MATRON.

Nay, pray, Sir, pray,
Admit a decent time for ſorrow;
To day I vow, I cant allow---
It muſt not be---before to-morrow.

AIR AND CHORUS.

FATHER. Thus, old wits, in wicked ſatires,
Formerly the fair malign'd;
Call'd them light, vain, falſe, affected,
And unſteady as the wind.
If they copy'd after nature,
Bleſs'd are Engliſh dames I trow,
So much alter'd from what ladies
Were two thouſand years ago.

MATRON.

MATRON. False and mean the accuſation
Men our ſex unjuſtly blame;
They are ſlaves to little paſſions,
And would brand us with the ſame.
Struck with native imperfection,
As their minds the object ſours;
From themſelves they draw a picture,
Then cry out the face is ours.

MAID. Says a traveller to a lion,
Upon yonder ſign-poſt ſee,
How a lion like your worſhip's
Torn by a man like me.
Says the lion to the traveller,
'Twas a man the daubing drew;
Had a lion been the painter,
I had been a tearing you.

CENTU. No excuſes, nor alluſions:
Here's the burden of my ſong;
Women ſovereigns are of nature,
And as ſuch can ne'er be wrong.
Sent to rule, to bleſs, to charm us,
Spite of wit, in rancour's ſpite,
Ev'ry thing they ſay is proper,
Ev'ry thing they do is right.

FINIS.